



# HOWARD COUNTY HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

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February 19, 2021

Dear County Executive Ball and County Councilmembers:

In October 2019, during a public forum before the Howard County Human Rights Commission (the “Commission”), representatives from The Howard County Coalition for Immigrant Justice (the “Coalition”) presented concerns they had – and still have – regarding several issues related to immigrant justice and safety. As a result of the presentation by the Coalition, the Commission formed a Committee on Immigration (the “Committee”) to study two of the issues raised: (1) termination of the Intergovernmental Service Agreement between the Howard County Department of Corrections and the United States Department of Justice; and (2) addition of immigration status as a protected class to Subtitle 2 of the Howard County Code.

After a thorough study of these two issues, the Committee prepared a draft report to the full Commission, which further studied and deliberated over the issues. The Commission now presents the attached *2020 Report of the Howard County Human Rights Commission on Immigration Issues in Howard County* (the “Commission Report”). The Commission Report details the factual findings from Committee’s study and the Commission’s recommendations based on these findings. The Exhibits to the Commissioner Report can be found at <https://www.howardcountymd.gov/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=Mvaei6IbvNg%3d&portalid=0>.

Regarding the first issue, the Commission supports the recent change to the County’s policy known as P & P No. C-205, such that the Howard County Department of Corrections’ acceptance of detainees under the Intergovernmental Service Agreement between the Howard County Department of Corrections and the United States Department of Justice shall be limited to those who have been convicted of crimes of violence identified under Md. Code, Criminal Law, § 14-101. Regarding the second issue, the Commission supports adding immigration status as a protected class to each cause of action in Subtitle 2, Sections 12.200-12.218 of the Howard County Code, related to Human Rights, to the maximum extent possible without conflicting with other federal, state, and local laws.

The Commission reserves the right to continue studying these issues as circumstances evolve. For example, the Commission recently received a copy of an October 28, 2020 Report by the Inspector General of the Department of Homeland Security titled ICE Needs to Address Concerns about Detainee Care and Treatment at the Howard County Detention Center, related to a site visit to the Howard County Detention Center in December 2019. This report raises several concerns related to human rights that the Commission may wish to study further. The Commission anticipates and expects that all detainees, including undocumented detainees, be treated with dignity, respect, and in accordance with policy.

Should you have any questions or comments regarding the Commission Report, we would be happy to meet with you or your staff to discuss these matters further. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of these important issues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott B. Markow", written over a light gray rectangular background.

Scott B. Markow, Chair